

Arrangements and Cooperative Arrangements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

The coordination of time limited and on-going support services is vital to the provision of supported employment services. The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) has been proactive in working collaboratively with service providers and public agencies to coordinate funding sources and policies related to supported employment. These efforts are categorized into two areas:

- Formal Cooperative Agreements
- Informal Cooperative Efforts with Agencies

Formal Cooperative Arrangements

SBVI and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) have in place a formal cooperative agreement with the Divisions of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Office of Special Education, and the Department of Labor. The purpose of the cooperative agreement is to:

- Define supported employment and related terms;
- Address eligibility requirements;
- Define the referral process;
- Identify responsibilities of each agency;
- Define extended support services to be provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Mental Health;
- Identify time-limited services to be provided by SBVI and DRS;
- Describe the process for service plan development;
- Outline requirements for transition to extended services; and,
- responsibilities for post-employment services.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities entered into a letter of understanding with SBVI and DRS defining how each agency's funding sources are coordinated in regard to the time limited and on-going support services. This agreement has had a significant impact on service provision for consumers who once lived in institutions or Intensive Care Facilities. These individuals have the most significant impediments to employment and benefit from access SBVI services to achieve supported employment outcomes.

A document established to help coordinate the services and funding between the Divisions of Mental Health, SBVI, and DRS serves as a policy directive for the Community Mental Health Centers and the local SBVI and DRS Offices. It

provides guidance in three areas relative to providing vocational services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness:

1. Services provided by the Community Mental Health Center;
2. Services available from Vocational Rehabilitation;
3. Appropriate Division to pay for the variety of services.

Informal Cooperative arrangements with agencies

SBVI works collaboratively with other State agencies on a day-to-day basis to better serve individuals with disabilities. Following are some of these collaborative efforts:

- SBVI State Office staff are co-located with the Divisions of Developmental Disabilities, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Rehabilitation Services, and Mental Health. Our agencies can easily communicate to coordinate services between Divisions for consumers with a variety of disabilities.
- SBVI's vocational rehabilitation counselors are co-located with the local Career Center Offices. When vocational rehabilitation counselors travel, they frequently utilize offices in the Career Centers, Job Shops, Social Services, Court Houses, Community Rehabilitation Programs and other agencies to reinforce collaborative efforts.
- The public vocational rehabilitation agencies are working closely with all partners identified in the Workforce Investment Act to collaborate in the implementation of the Act. Staff serve on implementation workgroups, task forces, the State Workforce Development Council, and on local Workforce Development Councils.